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AUTHOR Fiene, Richard John
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INSTITUTION State Univ. of New York, Stony Brook. Dept. of Psychology.
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ABSTRACT

This research study, one in a series on day care, is based on the rationale that 2-year-old children, in play, are predominantly oriented toward solitary play and adults. Twelve subjects between 24 and 38 months of age, matched demographically on the Caldwell Pre-School Inventory and the Vineland Social Scales of Maturity were selected to test this hypothesis. Six of the subjects participated in an Individualized Instruction Program (I.I.P.) of play, and the remaining six belonged to a group play program. Pretest baseline data, midtest, and posttest data were obtained. Test results showed significantly better scores for the I.I.P. group on both the Caldwell Pre-School Inventory and the Vineland Social Scales of Maturity. Interactional data revealed more cooperative play among the I.I.P. subjects. Subsequent discussion indicated that the I.I.P. subjects were more successful due to the presence of the needed adult in their interaction with the environment. In addition, in group play a staff/student ratio of 1:3 produced a higher quality of verbal and social interaction than a ratio of 2:6. (SDH)

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Cognitive and Socio-emotional Development of Preschool Children in Individualized Instruction Program

Richard John Fiene

State University of New York at Stony Brook

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The reason for this research study and the creation of the Individualized Instruction Program at the Child Development Center were multi-faceted. One was the observation of how two year old children interacted and played differently than three-five year old children.* In observing the two year olds, their play was predominantly oriented towards parallel play (solitary play) with a lack of group orientation.

Other researchers (Keister, 1969; Honig, 1972) have shown the beneficial effects of group care of two year olds. This project was not to discredit any of these findings but rather to provide an alternative to this group setting.

What was proposed was to study two year olds in a group setting as versus individualized instruction. The rationale for the Individualized Instruction Project (I.I.P.) was not only to play on the parallelist tendencies

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* Observations occurred at the Stage XII Early Childhood Center at the State University of New York at Stony Brook.

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OF THE CHILD'S BEHAVIOR BUT ALSO ON THE ADULT ORIENTED PLAY OF THE TWO YEAR OLD CHILD. AT THIS AGE THE CHILD REALLY NEEDS AN ADULT TO WORK WITH IN ORDER TO INTERACT WITH AN OBJECT OR TOY APPROPRIATELY. THEY ESSENIALLY NEED THEIR OWN TOYS PRESENTED IN A VERY INDIVIDUALISTIC MANNER. RATHER THAN HAVING TOYS OR MATERIALS PLACED IN A GROUP FOR ALL TO SHARE, THE TOYS OR MATERIALS NEED TO BE PLACED IN SUCH A FASHION THAT EACH CHILD HAS JUST AS MUCH AS ANY OTHER CHILD AND NEEDS NOT GO TO ANY OTHER CHILD FOR ADDITIONAL MATERIALS.

METHOD

SUBJECTS:

TWELVE Ss, SIX (6) MALE AND SIX (6) FEMALES BETWEEN THE AGES OF 24 TO 37 MONTHS DEMONGRAPHICALLY MATCHED ON THE CALDWELL PRE-SCHOOL INVENTORY AND THE VINELAND SOCIAL SCALES OF MATURITY, AGE AND RACE. THREE MALES AND THREE FEMALES WERE SELECTED TO RECEIVE THE I.I.P. WHILE THE OTHER THREE MALES AND THREE FEMALES WERE IN A GROUP PROGRAM.

SETTING:

ALL THE 12 Ss WERE ENROLLED I. FULL DAY CARE (8 HRS/DAY) AT THE CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER AT THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT STONY BROOK. FIFTY PERCENT HAD PRE-SCHOOL EXPERIENCE WHILE 50% HAD NO PRE-SCHOOL EXPERIENCE. ALL EXPERIENCED A ONE-TO-ONE SETTING WHEN ENTERING THE CENTER. THEN AFTER ONE MONTH THE CHILDREN WERE DIVIDED INTO ONE GROUP RECEIVING THE I.I.P. AND THE OTHER GROUP RECEIVING A GROUP SETTING.

PROCEDURE:

STAFF OF THE CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER WERE INSTRUCTED IN THE TWO TYPES OF INSTRUCTION--GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL. ONE RECEIVED THE INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION WHERE THEY INITIATED ALL ACTIVITIES WITH ONLY ONE CHILD OR WHERE ALL THE MATERIALS FOR EACH CHILD WERE PROVIDED. THE OTHER GROUP WAS INSTRUCTED IN GROUP ACTIVITIES WHERE THE CHILDREN ENGAGED IN GROUP TIME WITH LITTLE OR NO INDIVIDUALIZATION WHERE MATERIALS WERE PLACED IN GROUPS TO BE SHARED. THIS OCCURRED AT THE TIME THAT THE OTHER CHILDREN WERE ENGAGED IN THE INDIVIDUALIZED SETTING. BOTH SETTINGS LASTED FOR ONE HOUR IN THE MORNING AND ONE HOUR IN THE AFTERNOON. SUBJECTS USED THE SAME PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT AND TOYS, JUST THAT DIFFERENT ROOMS WERE USED. THE STUDY WAS CONDUCTED OVER FIVE MONTHS. ONE MONTH WAS ORIENTATION WHILE FOUR MONTHS WAS DEVOTED TO THE TWO DIFFERENT PROGRAMS--GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL. PRE-TEST FOR BASELINE DATA AND DEMOGRAPHIC MATCHING, MID-TEST, AND POST TEST WERE OBTAINED ON ALL THE CHILDREN.

THE GROUP PLAY THAT WAS USED WAS DEMONSTRATED TO BE OF A HIGH QUALITY SO THAT THE SE IN THIS GROUP DID MAKE GAINS BUT THEY WERE NOT SIGNIFICANT.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

IN LOOKING AT THE TEST DATA IN CHART 1, THE I.I.P. GROUP DID SIGNIFICANTLY BETTER THAN THE GROUP SETTING ON THE CALDWELL PRE-SCHOOL INVENTORY ($t=2.21$, $p<.01$). THE I.I.P. GROUP ALSO SHOWED SIGNIFICANTLY BETTER SCORES THAN THE GROUP SETTING ON THE VINELAND SOCIAL SCALES OF MATURITY ($t=3.42$, $p<.01$).

INSERT CHART 1

THE INTERACTIONAL DATA TAKEN DURING THE MID-TEST SHOWED MORE COOPERATIVE PLAY AMONGST THE INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION PROGRAM SUBJECTS. THE GROUP SETTING SUBJECTS SHOWED LITTLE COOPERATIVE PLAY AND MORE DISRUPTIVE AND INAPPROPRIATE PLAY (THROWING, FIGHTING, BITING WERE OBSERVED IN MORE CASES IN THE GROUP SETTING THAN IN THE I.I.P.).

THE SUBJECTS APPEARED TO DO SO WELL IN THE I.I.P.

CHART 1

T-TESTS COMPUTED ON THE INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION PROGRAM SS AND THE GROUP SETTING SS ON THE CALDWELL PRE-SCHOOL INVENTORY AND VINELAND SOCIAL SCALES OF MATURITY

	PRE-SCHOOL	VINELAND
GROUP	185	116
I.I.P.	290	250
T-TESTS	2.21*	3.42*

* $p < .01$

BECAUSE OF THE NEED OF TWO YEAR OLDS FOR ADULTS IN INTERACTING WITH THEIR ENVIRONMENT. THIS IS THE FIRST VENTURING OUT BY THE TWO YEAR OLD WHERE HE/SHE ENCOUNTERS MANY FEARS WHICH ARE FRIGTHENING TO THE CHILD WITHOUT AN ADULT PRESENT.

A SIDE-LIGHT TO THE ABOVE WAS FOUND IN THE GROUP SETTING Os. WHENEVER TWO GROUPS OF CHILDREN IN A STAFF TO CHILDREN RATIO OF 1-3 WAS USED IN-STEAD OF A GROUP EMPLOYING A STAFF TO CHILDREN RATIO OF 2-6, THE QUALITY OF INTERACTIONS WERE HIGHER (VERBALLY AND SOCIALLY). THE INTERACTIONS WERE DEEPER AND LONGER BOTH VERBALLY AND SOCIALLY IN THE SETTING WHERE TWO 1-3 GROUPS WERE USED RATHER THAN A 2-6 GROUP. POSSIBLE EXPLANATION IS THAT THE 1-3 IS MORE OF A FAMILY UNIT WHILE THE 2-6 IS TRULLY A GROUP SETTING WITH TWO ADULTS PRESENT WHO CANNOT AGREE ON EVERYTHING. IN THE LATTER CASE I SEE THE CHILDREN BECOMING EASILY CONFUSED.

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